



# National Parks & Conservation Magazine

The Environmental Journal

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ervation-oriented groups recently contacted the Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Anatoly F. Dobrynin, to repeat our standing request that all whaling by the Soviet Union be stopped and to ask that excess explosive harpoons be destroyed and vessels retired from whaling be dismantled or converted to other uses. The organizations pointed out that quota reductions by the IWC will be meaningless if excess whaling equipment goes to non-IWC nations that are not bound in any way to observe these quotas: for example, the Somali Republic, Guinea, Peru, Chile, and others.

The history of the decline of the great whales has been closely associated with the transfer of vessels and equipment from one country to another. Japan owns whaling companies and sails whaling fleets under the flags of non-IWC nations such as Peru and Chile, which set their own quotas and pursue a target-of-advantage philosophy—killing any whale that dares show itself—at times killing seriously endangered ones, such as blue whales.

When Prime Minister Takeo Miki of Japan visited Washington, D.C., in the autumn of 1975, conservationists petitioned him to end whaling by Japan and requested assurances that excess whaling equipment would not be sold or transferred for further whaling. Japan did not drop any fleets from this year's whaling voyages to the Antarctic, even though it has promised to abide by the quota.

In urging Mr. Dobrynin for an affirmative response concerning the disposal of excess Soviet whaling equipment, NPCA and the other groups remarked that "We would deeply appreciate a favorable decision by your country. Your leadership in banning the killing of dolphins and polar bears suggests that similar leadership may be applied to save the declining populations of the great whales."

NPCA lacks faith in the ability of the IWC to deal with the plight of the great whales; and we continue to press for a ten-year moratorium on all whaling, which is essential to pull the great whales back from the brink of extinction. NPCA supports a boycott of Japanese and Soviet goods as a means of pressuring these nations into taking significant steps to save the whales.

## news notes

**Public involvement in planning for the future of Yosemite National Park, California, is now in its second phase with distribution of workbooks to the more than 19,000 people who participated in the first or public workshop phase of planning and to others.**

The workbooks include four planning alternatives for future management of Yosemite, covering the range of views expressed at workshops. Respondents are asked to select or assemble the alternative they prefer and return it to the master plan team by January 16. After considering public response the team will fashion an environmental assessment and draft master plan. To obtain a workbook, write *immediately* to Yosemite Planning Team, NPS, c/o Golden Gate NRA, Fort Mason, San Francisco, California 94123. See "Help Plan Yosemite's Future," June 1975.

**Approving the sale of 1.25 million acres of oil leases near the Channel Islands off the southern California coast was one of Thomas S. Kleppe's first major decisions as the new Secretary of the Interior.**

Conservationists fear the leasing will mean disaster for the fascinating array of marine mammals, sea birds, plants, and sea life harbored by the islands, two of which—Anacapa and Santa Barbara islands—form Channel Islands National Monument. Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, and San Miguel islands are under consideration for inclusion in that National Park System unit, and the Park Service had objected to the oil and gas leasing program partly on that basis.

In a decision meeting on October 31, 1975, Kleppe approved sale of most of the 1.6 million acres of leases under consideration, but excluded .35 million acres of the leases from sale (see map). At press time, the sale was scheduled for December 11, 1975.

The abundant flora and fauna of these islands are varied and—as in the case of the rare island fox—often fascinatingly different from those on the mainland. Anacapa and Santa Barbara islands are characterized by high sea cliffs, wild flowers, and sea birds. Cali-

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### WORLDWIDE NATURE TOURS SPRING AND SUMMER DEPARTURES

#### THE AMERICAS

ALASKA: 17 days, June, July, & August • PRIBILOF ISLANDS & HOMER: 4 days, June, July, & August • THE EVERGLADES: 11 days, April & August • HAWAIIAN ISLANDS: 15 days, April & July • NEW YORK CITY & LONG ISLAND: 9 days, May & September • TRINIDAD & TOBAGO: 11 days, March • ALBERTA, YUKON, & THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES: 15 days, June, July, & August • BRITISH COLUMBIA FLOAT: 12 days, July & August • SUPERIOR-QUETICO CANOE: 9 days, July • COLOMBIA: 20 days, August • GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, & BELIZE: 16 days, April & July • SOUTHERN MEXICO: 14 days, April & July.

#### EUROPE

ENGLAND, WALES, & THE SCOTTISH LOWLANDS: 23 days, June & July • ICELAND: 16 days, June, July, & August • GREENLAND: 7 days, June, July, & August • NORWAY: 24 days, July • OUTER ISLANDS OF SCOTLAND & THE FAEROES: 24 days, June & July.

#### ASIA

INDONESIA: 24 days, April, July, & September • KASHMIR WITH LADAKH: 22 days, July, August, & September • MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE, & BRUNEI: 22 days, May & July • NEPAL TREK: 23 days, March • SOUTHERN INDIA & SRI LANKA: 23 days, July.

#### AFRICA

EAST AFRICA, KENYA, & TANZANIA: 22 days, April & July • SOUTH AFRICA & BOTSWANA: 22 days, April & September.

#### OCEANIA/AUSTRALASIA

AUSTRALIA: 34 days, September • AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND COMBINATION: 34 days, July & September.



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fornia's only remaining nesting colony of the endangered California brown pelican is on Anacapa, an island consisting of three small ridges of land joined by shallow reefs. Santa Barbara Island harbors large rookeries of sea lions, and the islands host sea otters, sea elephants, and the rare Guadalupe fur seal.

The northern Channel Islands include more than 220 species of birds, more than 800 varieties of plants, and archaeological and paleontological values. Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa are luxuriant with plant life and the latter is surrounded by kelp beds important to a variety of sea life. San Miguel harbors one of the largest known colonies of sea elephants as well as thousands of sea lions and other pinnipeds, bird rookeries, and several pairs of nesting eagles.

Although wildlife and other resources of the other Channel Islands—Santa Catalina, San Clemente, and San Nicolas—have already suffered from developments and utilization as a U.S.

Navy target range, they are still used by hundreds of marine mammals.

Operations in the leasing area east of Santa Catalina Island (especially Anaheim Bay) would threaten three endangered species of birds—the light-footed clapper rail, California least tern, and Belding's savannah sparrow.

In granting the leases, the Interior Department notes that it placed some stipulations on lease operations in the area of estuaries in the San Pedro Bay, and in the area of San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, and Santa Barbara islands. In order to control oil spills, oil containment equipment must be maintained on each platform. The equipment should represent the "best available technology" or "similar safeguards . . . as approved by the [USGS] supervisor." The regulations also provide a federal buffer zone of three-quarters of a mile around state waters.

However, these stipulations—and even the elimination from sale of tracts south of San Miguel Island and those in Santa Monica Bay—must be consid-

ered in light of the probable effects of the leasing operations and associated developments on air and water quality and flora and fauna.

As pointed out by the Bureau of Land Management environmental impact statement on the project, the impacts of the leasing program will be region-wide. For instance, a single major oil spill can create a 500-square-mile slick. The BLM admits that impacts resulting from accidental oil spills are "inevitable" and statistically "unavoidable." Millions of gallons of oil can be expected to spill into Channel Islands waters during the forty- to sixty-year life of the program. There would be serious impacts on marine ecosystems and some endemic species might become extinct. (See the October 1975 Magazine for more information on the Channel Islands.) The state of California is considering filing suit over the leasing program.

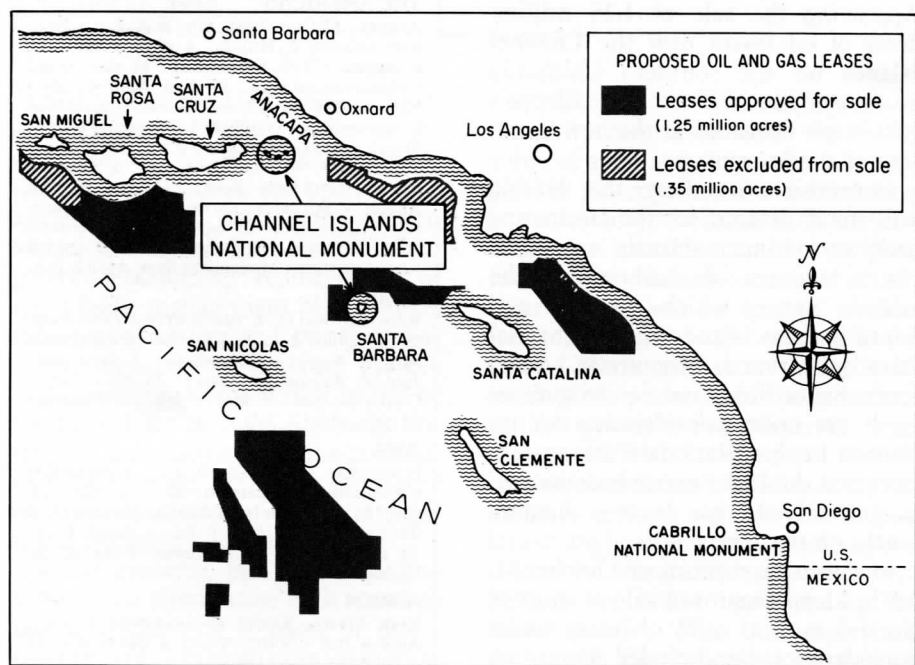
The Administration also took steps recently toward future sale of leases off the shores of Alaska and off the Atlantic Coast. It authorized oil companies to drill two test wells off the Atlantic Coast—one 75 miles from Cape Cod National Seashore, Massachusetts, and one eighty miles east of Atlantic City, New Jersey.

**"Even during a time of recession, high unemployment, and rising fuel costs, the public does not voice a readiness to cut back on environmental control programs to solve economic and energy problems,"** according to Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton, New Jersey.

In fact, recent studies show that six people in ten say that it is more important to pay the price necessary to protect the environment. ORC has reached the following conclusions in its study of "Public Attitudes Toward Environmental Tradeoffs," based on telephone interviews with a national probability sample of 1,222 adults.

Given a choice, most people indicate that they believe it is more important to pay the costs involved in protecting the environment than to keep prices and taxes down and run the risk of more pollution.

While younger people, the better educated, and environmentalists display the most support for this point of view, it is also held by a majority of



The Channel Islands off the southern California coast, which are in the first target area of the Ford Administration's plans to accelerate offshore oil development into new areas, include two islands that are part of the National Park System—Anacapa Island and Santa Barbara Island. In addition, Santa Cruz, San Miguel, and Santa Rosa islands have been proposed for addition to the national monument. The development will threaten marine mammals, birds including the endangered California brown pelican, remarkable flora, and a panoply of fascinating sea creatures. As shown above, all the Santa Monica Bay tracts, eighteen tracts south of San Miguel, and a few others have been eliminated. Parts of a few buffer zone tracts were also eliminated. However, most tracts proposed for the oil and gas lease sale were approved by Secretary of the Interior Thomas S. Kleppe.